



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk 860-441-6640  
Town Manager  
860-441-6630

**Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson**

**Tuesday, September 27, 2011**

**7:00 PM**

**Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1**

#### **REGULAR MEETING**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

*The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.*

*A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to elect Deborah Monteiro Chairman pro tem.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*

#### **2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Sheets

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.*

#### **3. Calendar and Communications**

*Councilor Watson noted he will be attending the CCM conference.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that a number of Councilors will not be present for next week's Town Council meeting.*

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **2011-0187 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)**

##### **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting of September 13, 2011 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adopt.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

#### **5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **2011-0004 Pending Litigation (2011 Standing Referral)**

##### **PENDING LITIGATION (2011 STANDING REFERRAL)**

**A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Watson, that members of the Committee of the Whole along with Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Director of Public Works Gary Schneider, and Town Attorney Eric Callahan go into executive session at 7:07 p.m. pursuant to CGS Sec. 1-200(6)(B) for the purpose of discussing strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and/or pending litigation concerning damage to the Water Pollution Control Facility.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**Discussed**

*The executive session ended at 7:26 p.m.*

**A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Watson, to accept the agreement discussed in executive session and authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement on behalf of the Town.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2011-0177**

**John Kelley Memorial**

**Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger distributed a map showing the circle at the intersection of Clift Street and Pequot Avenue proposed by Mr. James Roy as the location for a statue of John Kelly. The site is a landscaped island that was the previous location of the John Mason statue. Mr. Roy, a resident of River Road, addressed the Council. He noted he is spearheading the effort to recognize John Kelly. He has heard some concern about removing the existing tree in the island and he does not want to cause any controversy. Mr. Roy is proposing an alternate location that has been reviewed with other involved in this effort, including the family. Mr. Roy suggested a parcel across from the boat launch on River Road just north of the I-95 overpass that he believes is Town-owned property. People who are familiar with fundraising efforts feel that sharing John Kelley's memory is more important than the statute itself, so this new location would be better and provide more exposure. The group has started a web site ([www.johnkelley.org](http://www.johnkelley.org)) and will be approaching large organizations for donations. This area would also be perfect for picnic benches and a solar outhouse.*

*Councilor O'Beirne suggested that Fitch High School may be another alternative site and Councilor Kolnaski expressed support for the suggestion. Councilor Monteiro expressed support for either Fitch or the River Road site.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted that there are a number of potential sites. The River Road site is owned by the State of Connecticut, not the Town of Groton. Haley Farm is another potential location. He questioned if the location will be determined by the group or working with the Town. In order for the Town to grant permission, there must be some discussion with the group. Mr. Roy that informal meetings are being held with a small core group that includes the family and they will make the decision. The group will approach the Town Council with a proposal. Mr. Roy was encouraged to direct any questions to the Town Manager's office.*

**2011-0165**

**Status of Mystic Education Center**

**Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger, Mayor Streeter, and Councilor Watson met with the Commissioner of Administrative Services and staff on September 19th. The state has started the appraisal which is expected to be completed in November. The Town posed a number of questions. Formal notification of the property's availability is not expected until sometime next year. The Town asked about existing environmental conditions and reports, which the state is researching. The state was asked to provide a list of the groups or organizations that use the Pratt building and it appears that it is only the Town and L&M Hospital. It was clarified that the buildings will be heated to a minimal level. There was a discussion specific to the Pratt building about identifying the delta between dormant costs and the cost of utilizing the building for some period of time. The state has agreed to allow the Town to continue to use the field in the near term. The Town is working to set up a more detailed inspection of the Pratt building.*

*There was some discussion about learning from other state closures. If the Town wants to do a planning process, the state may consider releasing a staff person for the effort.*

*Councilor Watson noted some discussion about the disposition of the property being used by the fire departments. The Town should probably talk to the local legislators, who have already been approached by the fire departments.*

*The Town Manager noted that there is an interest in exploring how the Pratt building can be kept open for some time. Whether the Town has an interest in the property or not, the community will spend the next five to ten years determining what will happen to the property. The Town Manager noted that the property is zoned residential single family and there is a regulation in place for institutional reuse. The Town needs to have a better assessment of the buildings before meeting with the legislators regarding the fire departments' needs.*

*At the meeting, there was also some discussion about the Road that acts as a driveway to the site. The Town has asked the state for its research on the status of the northern section of Oral School Road.*

*Councilor Flax asked if the Town pays anything for the Pratt building and the Town Manager indicated the Town pays a lease fee. The programs that could be moved have already been moved. Aquatics were moved to Avery Point. It is slightly more expensive at Avery Point, but the Town is offering fewer programs. With respect to the pool, it is the therapeutic programs that have ceased. The Pratt building was used for programs other than aquatics.*

*Councilor Watson noted that lease fees go directly into the state's General Fund and not to Administrative Services, so it is no benefit to them to allow the space to be leased. Councilor Watson reviewed current use at the Avery Point pool.*

*Chairman Pro tem Monteiro noted that the theater space in the Pratt building could also be put to use. The Town Manager added that the Pratt building also has a small bowling alley, handball court, and gym, although the floor is badly damaged.*

**2009-0124****Ethics Ordinance****Discussed**

*Staff distributed the draft Ethics Code to the Council last week. Committee Chairman Dean Antipas wants to meet with the Council on October 25th. Councilors were asked to review the document and forward comments or questions to the Town Manager prior to October 25th meeting.*

*Councilor O'Beirne indicated he had e-mailed comments to the Town Manager. Councilor Johnson asked if the Board of Education is aware of this effort and it was unknown. Councilor Flax suggested that the Council should review the code first, before bringing in any department affected by it. The Town Manager feels the Council should review the Code first and raise any questions. Everyone in local government would be affected if an ordinance were to be adopted. This is the first step in the process.*

**2011-0188****Town Manager Annual Evaluation****Discussed**

*The evaluation form was included in the agenda packet. Although the Council had discussed changing the form, but that was never done. Chairman pro tem Monteiro assumes the same procedure will be used and forms will be submitted to the Mayor. Councilor Watson suggested setting a deadline of Friday, October 7th for submitting forms to the Mayor. Councilor Watson feels it is important for Councilors to meet with the Town Manager one on one.*

**7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List****2011-0014****Groton Housing Authority Annual Report****Recommended for Deletion****2011-0067****Use of Town of Groton Open Space by Horses****Recommended for Deletion**

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*The Town Manager noted that the October 11th and October 25th meetings will have lengthy agendas and he asked that Councilors notify the Town Manager's office if they are unable to attend meetings.*

*The Town Manager noted that there are appointee interviews pending in Group II, but it has been difficult at times to get a quorum. Discussion followed on alternatives including moving items to Committee of the Whole or asking the Mayor to make new committee assignments.*

*The Consensus of the Council was to cancel the October 4th Town Council meeting and hold a special meeting of the Town Council on October 11th.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*